

Serial No.: 09/989,049
Amendment dated 22 February 2005
Reply to Office Action mailed 10 February 2005

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

This Patent Application has been reconsidered carefully in light of the Office Action dated as mailed on 10 February 2005. A careful reconsideration of the application by the Examiner in light of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks is respectfully requested.

There is no additional claim fee due for this Amendment because the total number of claims does not exceed the number of independent and dependent claims for which fees have previously been paid.

Request for Telephone Interview

Applicant's undersigned attorney requests a telephone interview with the Examiner to discuss the merits of this Patent Application. The undersigned requests this interview if the amendments and arguments are not deemed sufficient to place this Patent Application in condition for allowance. If the Examiner feels the claims are not allowable for any reason, then please telephone the undersigned, Eric T. Krischke, at (847) 490-1400.

Amendments to the Claims

By the above Amendment, otherwise allowable Claims 5 and 6 have been rewritten in independent form to include all of the limitations of the base claim

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and any intervening claim. Claims 2-4 have been amended to depend from and further limit currently amended Claim 5.

Otherwise allowable Claim 9 has been rewritten in independent form to include all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claim. Claims 7 and 8 have been canceled, accordingly.

Original independent Claim 15 has been amended to depend from and further limit previously presented independent Claim 31.

Claims 2-6 and 9-33 remain in the application.

Allowable Subject Matter

As a preliminary matter, the undersigned wishes to thank Examiner Brown for the allowance of Claims 19-33 and the indication that Claims 5, 6 and 9-14 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

By the above amendments, Claims 5, 6 and 9 have been so rewritten. Thus, Claims 2-6 and 9-18 are believed to be in condition for allowance and notification to that effect is solicited.

Claim Rejections - 35 U.S.C. § 102(a)

Claims 1-4 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(a) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent 5,830,168 to Finnell et al. (hereinafter “Finnell”).

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In view of the above cancellation of Claim 1 and the rewriting of Claim 5 such basis of rejection is believed to have been obviated or rendered no longer applicable to the pending claims.

Applicant respectfully requests withdrawal of this rejection.

Claim Rejections - 35 U.S.C. § 102(b)

Claims 7 and 8 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent 4,905,678 to Cumins et al. (hereinafter "Cumins").

In view of the above cancellation of claims 7 and 8 such basis of rejection is believed to have been obviated or rendered no longer applicable to the pending claims.

Applicant respectfully requests withdrawal of this rejection.

Claim Rejections - 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

Claims 7 and 8 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent 4,531,515 to Rofles (hereinafter "Rofles").

In view of the above cancellation of claims 7 and 8 such basis of rejection is believed to have been obviated or rendered no longer applicable to the pending claims.

Applicant respectfully requests withdrawal of this rejection.

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Claims 15-18 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Finnell in view of Rofles.

In view of the above amendment to Claim 15 to depend from and further limit allowed Claim 31 such basis of rejection is believed to have been obviated or rendered no longer applicable to the pending claims.

Applicant respectfully requests withdrawal of this rejection.

Conclusion

It is believed that the above Amendment places all pending claims in condition for allowance and notification to that effect is solicited. However, should the Examiner detect any remaining issue or have any question, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned, preferably by telephone, in an effort to expedite examination of this Patent Application.

Respectfully submitted,



Eric T. Krischke
Registration No. 42,769

Pauley Petersen & Erickson
2800 West Higgins Road
Suite 365
Hoffman Estates, Illinois 60195
TEL (847) 490-1400
FAX (847) 490-1403